

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) today announced \$95,736 for two local fire departments to enhance first responder preparedness through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP).

"I am pleased to announce these funds to provide local fire departments with the resources they need to enhance firefighter safety and efficiency," **said Arcuri, a member of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus**

"These grants enable departments to purchase critical equipment and vehicle upgrades to improve their already heroic work protecting our communities. I am proud to announce that the House of Representatives recently passed legislation to help volunteer first responders by increasing tax assistance for these community heroes. I will continue working in Washington to ensure that local first responders have the resources they need to keep us safe."

The grants include \$35,078 for the West Lake Road Fire Association in Geneva and \$60,658 for the North Norwich Volunteer Fire Department in Chenango County.

The West Lake Road Fire Association will use this grant to replace their outdated and worn five inch water supply hose. West Lake's current hose is from 1990 and it lacks some safety couplings, which ensure firefighter safety. West Lake will also buy new manifolds and hose gates for the trucks, which will standardize their hoses and trucks and improve efficiency and capability.

"This grant gives us more capability and makes us a more efficient fire department," **said Roger Allen, a Firefighter with the West Lake Road Fire Association**

"This gives the community added protection and makes our fire operations more efficient - cutting down on fire damage and saving homeowners money. Because these are things we can't afford to buy, as far as capital outlay, these grants are really a great help. We can better protect the community and our firefighters in everyway."

The West Lake Road Fire Association will also use the grant to purchase a thermal imaging camera.

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP) awards grants to firefighters, emergency response personnel and first responders to enhance response capabilities and to more effectively protect the health and safety of first responders and the citizens in their communities. AFGP grants provide resources for training, first responder health and safety programs, and response equipment and vehicles.

Since 2004, AFGP has provided a total of almost \$2.2 billion nationwide to first-responder organizations to purchase response equipment, personal protective equipment, and vehicles. In fiscal year 2007, AFGP will award approximately \$490 million directly to fire departments and EMS organizations to enhance their response capabilities.

In March, Arcuri joined 100 Members of Congress in writing to the House Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee requesting additional funding for the AFG Program as well as Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grants that provide assistance to local departments to increase the number of first responders.

In June, the House passed the fiscal year 2008 Homeland Security Appropriations bill, which included a substantial increase in funding for AFGP and SAFER. The bill includes \$800 million for AFGP in fiscal year 2008.

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